AMENDMENT

In the Claims:

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- A. Kindly cancel Claim 4, without prejudice.
- B. Kindly amend Claims 1, 2, 5, 12, and 14, as follows.
- 1. (Twice Amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, having a nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack, comprising: initiating formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack by:

depositing a first ultra-thin nitride film on a semiconductor substrate, wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film is deposited by using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique;

- depositing a high-k material on the first ultra-thin nitride film,
 wherein the high-k material comprises a thin metal film, and
 wherein the thin metal film comprises at least one material selected from
 a group consisting essentially of zirconium (Zr), hafnium (Hf),
 and titanium (Ti); and
- depositing a second ultra-thin nitride film on the high-k material, thereby forming a sandwich structure, wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film is deposited using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique;
- completing formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack from the sandwich structure; and completing fabrication of the device.
- 2. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the substrate comprises a material selected from a group consisting of a silicon wafer and a silicon-on-insulator (SOI) wafer.

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- 5. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the thin metal film further comprises tantalum (Ta).
- 12. (Twice Amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, having a nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack, comprising:

initiating formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack by: depositing a first ultra-thin nitride film on a semiconductor substrate,

wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film is deposited by using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique, and

wherein the substrate comprises a material selected from a group consisting of a silicon wafer and a silicon-on-insulator (SOI) wafer;

depositing a high-k material on the first ultra-thin nitride film,
wherein the high-k material comprises a thin metal film, and
wherein the thin metal film comprises at least one material selected from
a group consisting essentially of zirconium (Zr), hafnium (Hf),
and titanium (Ti); and

depositing a second ultra-thin nitride film on the high-k material, thereby forming a sandwich structure, wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film is deposited by using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique;

completing formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack from the sandwich structure; and

completing fabrication of the device.

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14. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 13, wherein the thin metal film further comprises tantalum (Ta), and wherein the thin metal film further comprises a metal oxide.